BRAZILIAN CONTEMPORARY THEATRE · 巴西当代戏剧

The Empty Suitcase

空箱子

O Vazio na Mala

What do we carry when we leave everything behind?

当抛下一切离开时，我们带走了什么?



A production by Culturas em Movimento · São Paulo, Brazil · culturasemmovimento.com



Samuel and the locked suitcase. Photo: João Caldas Filho

THE STORY IN ONE LINE · 故事

GERMANY → SHANGHAI → BRAZIL

德国 → 上海 → 巴西

A family flees persecution in Germany, finds refuge in Shanghai during the Second World War and rebuilds its life in Brazil. Decades later, what the family kept, and what it never said, becomes theatre.

What does one generation leave inside the next?

THE PLAY · 剧目

A suitcase no one may open.

Inspired by the true story of the Jedwab family, The Empty Suitcase began with documents hidden inside an old suitcase, left untouched for decades. At its centre lies a question: what remains inside a family when certain stories are no longer told?

Combining theatre, original music, projections and visual storytelling, the production creates a poetic, emotionally charged experience where personal memory and collective history meet. Rooted in Jewish diaspora and Holocaust memory, it reaches the universal: belonging, migration, survival, and the invisible legacies passed from one generation to the next.

MEMORY · MIGRATION · FAMILY · SURVIVAL

记忆 · 迁徙 · 家庭 · 幸存



Esther, Ruth and the typewriter. Photo: João Caldas Filho

WHY SHANGHAI · 为什么是上海

Shanghai is part of the story.

In 1939, Shanghai was one of the very few places in the world that still asked for no visa. It did not just let this family survive: it took them in.

1939	Breslau, Germany. Wilhelm and Kaethe Jedwab leave with their son Marcel, one year old.
8 April 1939	Shanghai. 24/9 Ward Road, Hongkou. A ghetto pass, a school report card, a childhood in wartime.
Nine years	The family lives through the war in Shanghai. Wilhelm dies in China in 1948.
1949	Santos, Brazil. Kaethe and Marcel sail from Shanghai. The suitcase travels with them.

Today the Jedwab name is on the Wall of Names of the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum, and the story returns to the city that took the family in.



Shanghai on stage, in the play



Esther and Samuel. Photo: João Caldas Filho

WHAT WE CARRY · 我们带走了什么

A story about human beings.

The people at the centre of the play are not only those who lived through that history. They are also the ones who came after: children and grandchildren who did not live through the original loss, and yet carry something from it. Silence. Fear. Memory. Ways of loving and of protecting.

“Every family carries something from those who came before. That is why audiences who have no connection to my family's history have recognised themselves in this play.”

Dinah Feldman, creator and actress

FLEEING → REFUGE → REBUILDING → BELONGING → MEMORY → RETURN



102
PERFORMANCES
场演出

40,000+
SPECTATORS
观众人次

7
CITIES
座城市

6
AWARDS
项大奖

Premiered on 21 March 2024 at Teatro do SESI-SP, São Paulo; selected for the Festival 2024 em Cena. In six of the seven cities, it played at venues of the same theatre network.

Three Bibi Ferreira Awards (Best Play, Best Original Playwriting, Best Actress) · **APCA** (Playwriting) · **two CENYM** (Artistic Quality, Set Design) · Shell Award nomination for Noemi Marinho.

Premiere season, Teatro do SESI-SP, São Paulo, March 2024. Photo: João Caldas Filho

PRESS · 评论

What the critics wrote.

“The Empty Suitcase achieves such a successful result thanks to a cast capable of giving the play a whole new dimension.”

Dirceu Alves Jr. · InfoTeatro

“Noemi Marinho. A giant. Capable of making the theatre of the world take shelter in her sensitive reconstruction of life.”

Marcio Tito · Deus Ateu

“Kiko Marques's staging benefits from the actors' experience and an intelligent use of the stage space to create an absorbing experience that overflows the narrative.”

e-Urbanidade



Noemi Marinho as Esther. Photo: João Caldas Filho

WHY NOW · 为何是现在

The beginning of an international life.

The Empty Suitcase has not yet toured abroad. It is now entering that process, with a production that already exists, has met its audience and is ready to travel.

In China, interest has arrived before the first performance: from the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum, and from a university that wants to connect a future performance to its academic programme.

2019	The exhibition of the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum comes to the Jewish Museum of São Paulo. The play is born from it.
2024	World premiere at Teatro do SESI-SP, São Paulo.
2025	Six more cities in one theatre network. In October, Dinah Feldman presents the project at the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum, which publishes the story.
2026	ChinaSPAF, Shanghai: Pitch Session “Going to Chinese Mainland!”, 16 October.
2027 →	International touring and partnerships. A possible run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is being explored.

ENGAGEMENT · 延伸活动

More than one evening.

The play can travel as a programme: the performance, and around it talks, workshops and educational activities in each city.

- **Post-show conversations** with the cast and creators, held every Sunday during the São Paulo season.
- **Masterclass** with Dinah Feldman on memory, oral tradition and storytelling.
- **Workshops** on storytelling and family memory; school sessions on migration and family memory.
- **Talks and seminars** for universities and museums on memory, migration and the Jewish refugees who found shelter in Shanghai during the Second World War.

Adapted to each context, with mediation or translation when needed. Precedent: the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum.



Ruth and Esther. Photo: João Caldas Filho

TOURING & TECHNICAL · 巡演与技术配置

The identity stays. The setup adapts.

Created for a proscenium stage, it travels as a medium-scale production and adapts to each venue's equipment, while keeping its artistic identity.

Full technical rider: culturasemmovimento.com, in Downloads.

TOURING PARTY	10 people: 4 actors, 4 technicians (lighting, sound, video and surtitles, stage), director and tour producer
RUNNING TIME	80 minutes, no interval
LANGUAGE	Portuguese, with English and Simplified Chinese surtitles
STAGE, IDEAL	12 m wide × 10 m deep · apron 4 m deep · 10 m to the grid
STAGE, MINIMUM	10 m wide × 9 m deep · apron 2 m deep · 9 m to the grid
PROJECTION	10,000-lumen laser projector · videomapping onto the set is essential
SOUND	Digital console with Dante · surround PA · 6 earset microphones
SET AND MUSIC	Hybrid: air freight and luggage; selected elements can be built locally · original recorded score
LOCAL CREW	Provided by the presenter for set-up, operation and strike



Dinah Feldman, Fábio Herford, Noemi Marinho, Marcos Suchara. Photo: João Caldas Filho

WORKING TOGETHER · 合作方式

What we are looking for.

- Presenters and venues
- Festivals
- Touring partners
- Cultural and educational partnerships
- International collaboration and development

PERFORMANCES · TALKS · WORKSHOPS · EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Available 2026–2028, by prior arrangement. Fee and conditions are adapted to each venue and tour length: we prepare a proposal for each block of dates.

THE COMPANY · 剧团

Culturas em Movimento

Theatre rooted in memory, oral tradition and women's narratives. Founded in São Paulo in 2005 by actress, storyteller and producer Dinah Feldman Harari, a descendant of Jewish refugees who lived in Shanghai. *The Empty Suitcase*, originally produced by SESI-SP, is its most travelled production.

CONCEPT	Dinah Feldman
PLAYWRIGHT	Nanna de Castro
DIRECTOR	Kiko Marques
ORIGINAL MUSIC & SOUND	Gregory Slivar
LIGHTING	Wagner Pinto
SET DESIGN	Márcio Medina
IMAGE & VIDEOMAPPING	André Grynwask & Pri Argoud
CAST	Dinah Feldman, Noemi Marinho, Fábio Herford, Marcos Suchara

CONTACT · 联系方式

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SITE · 网站

TRAILER · 预告片

On the site: the trailer, the technical rider, the programme, the press clippings and the museum's article.

From Shanghai to the world. 从上海走向世界。

Photographs: João Caldas Filho; Karim Kahn / SESI-SP · Original production: SESI-SP